

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD a USDA factsheet that contains the programs that are available: Emergency Conservation Program, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program, Disaster Debt Set-Aside Program, and the Emergency Loan Program.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ONGOING DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS  
FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

OVERVIEW

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers farmers and ranchers various types of disaster aid to facilitate recovery from losses caused by drought, flood, freeze, tornadoes, hurricane, and other natural events. Ongoing disaster assistance programs available to eligible producers are:

EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM (ECP)

ECP provides funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought. The natural disaster must create new conservation problems which, if not treated, would:

Impair or endanger the land;  
Materially affect the productive capacity of the land;

Represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and

Be so costly to repair that federal assistance is, or will be required, to return the land to productive agricultural use.

NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM (NAP)

NAP provides financial assistance to eligible producers affected by drought, flood, hurricane, or other natural disasters. NAP covers noninsurable crop losses and planting prevented by disasters.

Landowners, tenants, or sharecroppers who share in the risk of producing an eligible crop may qualify for this program. Before payments can be issued applications must first be received and approved, generally before the crop is planted, and the crop must have suffered a minimum of 50 percent loss in yield.

Eligible crops include commercial crops and other agricultural commodities produced for food, including livestock feed or fiber for which the catastrophic level of crop insurance is unavailable.

Also eligible for NAP coverage are controlled-environment crops (mushroom and floriculture), specialty crops (honey and maple sap), and value loss crops (aquaculture, Christmas trees, ginseng, ornamental nursery, and turfgrass sod).

DISASTER DEBT SET-ASIDE PROGRAM (DSA)

DSA is available to producers in primary or contiguous counties declared presidential or secretarial disaster areas. When borrowers affected by natural disasters are unable to make their scheduled payments on any debt, FSA is authorized to consider set-aside of some payments to allow the farming operation to continue.

After disaster designation is made, FSA will notify borrowers of the availability of the DSA. Borrowers who are notified have eight months from the date of designation to apply. Also, to meet current operating and family living expenses, FSA borrowers may request a release of income proceeds to meet these essential needs or request special servicing provisions from their local FSA county offices to explore other options. A complete

fact sheet about DSA can be found at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/debtset05.pdf>.

EMERGENCY LOAN PROGRAM (EM)

FSA provides emergency loans to help producers recover from production and physical losses due to drought, flooding, other natural disasters, or quarantine.

Emergency loans may be made to farmers and ranchers who own or operate land located in a county declared by the president as a disaster area or designated by the secretary of agriculture as a disaster area or quarantine area (for physical losses only, the FSA administrator may authorize emergency loan assistance). EM funds may be used to:

Restore or replace essential property;  
Pay all or part of production costs associated with the disaster year;  
Pay essential family living expenses;  
Reorganize the farming operation; and  
Refinance certain debts.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to print in the RECORD the editorial contained in the Washington Post on April 29 basically saying:

There are, no doubt, farmers who have suffered severe losses this year. Isn't that what crop insurance—government-subsidized crop insurance, to the tune of \$4.2 billion this year—is supposed to be about?

The administration is right to oppose this provision;

They are talking about the provision of \$4 billion in disaster payments to farmers as part of the emergency spending bill—

the Senate ought to show enough discipline to take it out.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 29, 2006]

FARMERS AT THE TROUGH

Farm Subsidies have risen from \$8 billion in 1997 to a projected \$22 billion this year. Farm earnings have risen, too. Net farm income grew from \$36 billion in 2002 to a record \$83 billion in 2004. Although that fell last year to \$72 billion and is forecast to drop again 2006, to \$56.2 billion, that's still above the 10-year average.

But why let good news stand in the way of even more payments to farmers? The Senate is poised to add \$4 billion in "disaster" payments to farmers as part of the emergency spending bill it's debating. A big chunk would go to farmers who have suffered no other disaster than the high energy prices that are hitting every other sector of the economy—not to mention anyone who drives a car.

Under the Senate proposal, farmers who already receive cash subsidies for the corn, wheat, cotton or other crops they grow—money they get when prices are high or prices are low, in good years and bad—would get an extra 30 percent, at a cost of \$1.56 billion on top of the \$5.2 billion the government is already spending. Because payments are based on the size of farm operations, this would funnel the largest amounts to the biggest commercial farms; according to an analysis by the Environmental Working Group, just 10 percent of bonus subsidy recipients will collect nearly 60 percent of the money. More than 50 producers would collect an extra \$100,000 or more. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the nation's farmers would get nothing under this program because they raise livestock or grow crops that aren't eligible for the subsidy.

Proponents of the spending point to droughts in Iowa, floods in North Dakota and wildfires in Texas—calamities that have affected farmers there, they say, in much the same way Hurricane Katrina slammed those in the Gulf Coast. There are, no doubt, farmers who have suffered severe losses this year. Isn't that what crop insurance—government-subsidized crop insurance, to the tune of \$4.2 billion this year—is supposed to be about? True, crop insurance doesn't cover, all losses, but should farming be the nation's only risk-free enterprise? Besides, one of the theories behind the egregious 2002 farm bill was that it would, at least, provide generous enough payments year in and year out that farmers wouldn't need emergency bailouts.

The administration is right to oppose this provision; the Senate ought to show enough discipline to take it out. Don't count on it, though. On Wednesday, Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) touted a letter to the president, joined by 35 of his colleagues, pledging to sustain a threatened veto if the spending package exceeds the administration's requested \$95.5 billion. That same day, the Senate voted by a veto-proof 72 to 26 against removing the farm spending and other provisions from the bill—current price tag, \$106.5 billion.

Mr. MCCAIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, if I may respond, on April 2 of this year, the rains ended. The Governor of Hawaii, in a most expeditious manner, gathered all the facts and filed a report with the President of the United States on April 10. That letter to the President requested that the President issue a declaration of disaster. It is now in the White House under consideration. It is unfortunate it is not before us, but we have been assured that it will be part of the declaration. I wish the record to show that the State of Hawaii did go through every regular step to make certain this request was done in the regular fashion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the amendment? If not, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 3617. The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 40, nays 59, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 104 Leg.]

YEAS—40

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|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Alexander | Dole      | Martinez    |
| Allard    | Ensign    | McCain      |
| Allen     | Enzi      | McConnell   |
| Brownback | Feingold  | Nelson (NE) |
| Bunning   | Frist     | Santorum    |
| Burr      | Graham    | Sessions    |
| Chafee    | Grassley  | Snowe       |
| Coburn    | Gregg     | Sununu      |
| Collins   | Hagel     | Thomas      |
| Cornyn    | Hutchison | Thune       |
| Craig     | Inhofe    | Vitter      |
| Crapo     | Isakson   | Voinovich   |
| DeMint    | Kyl       |             |
| DeWine    | Lugar     |             |